



KEEPING THE COMMUNITY INFORMED

Project Update

This issue describes the East Columbia EIS, how it will be used to determine the study area's future transportation needs and how you can play a role in it.

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CONTACT INFORMATION:

Missouri Department of Transportation

Mike Dusenbergh, Planning Manager
Phone: 1-888-ASK-MODOT (275-6636)
E-mail: michael.dusenbergh@modot.mo.gov

City of Columbia, Missouri

John Glascock, Public Works Director
Phone: 573-874-7250
E-mail: jdglasco@gocolumbiamo.com

Boone County, Missouri

David Mink, Public Works Director
Phone: 573-449-8515
E-mail: dmink@boonecountymmo.org



Boone County's 2025 population may exceed 147,000 people, potentially putting new demands on area roads.

Future East Columbia/regional transportation needs to be studied

City, county and state combine forces to examine how best to meet the area's transportation needs over the next 25 years.

The Missouri Department of Transportation, City of Columbia and Boone County are looking ahead and working together to study future transportation needs in East Columbia.

The study, an environmental impact statement (EIS), will examine how population growth and rapid development will impact transportation in the area generally bounded on the north by Interstate 70 south to New Haven Road, and on the west by U.S. Highway 63 east to State Highway Z (a project area map can be found on the inside pages).

What is an EIS?

An EIS is part of an objective process for deciding what actions, if any, are needed to best serve a community and its transportation needs. It is required by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Before a major highway project can be undertaken, a need must first be identified and impacts assessed to determine whether they outweigh potential benefits. Social, economic and environmental issues are among the impacts that an EIS is designed to look at.

As part of this assessment, the public's input is sought out through a number of methods, including informal briefings and formal public meetings such as those shown in the time line on the inside pages.

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PROJECT TIME LINE

This project is scheduled to be completed in 2008. Here are some tentative dates for upcoming key events. Items appearing in **CAPITAL LETTERS** are opportunities for public involvement.

Ongoing: Data collection and analysis.

Summer/Fall 2006: Draft Purpose & Need; PRE-LOCATION PUBLIC MEETING SEPTEMBER 19.

Fall 2006: Range of alternatives; PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETINGS.

EIS and NEPA: More than Alphabet Soup

“NEPA balances impacts on human and natural resources with the public’s need for safe and efficient transportation improvements.”

Mike Dusenberg
MoDOT Planning Manager



The NEPA process is designed to help people quantify the benefits – and the impacts – of potential solutions to emerging or future transportation challenges.

The East Columbia EIS combines into one study an Environmental Impact Statement and a location study. Both are important transportation tools, but each has a different focus and set of objectives.

Passage of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 is a key milestone in the move towards greater public involvement in deciding how highway and other infrastructure investments should be made.

NEPA requires that transportation and other governmental planning and investments:

- Reflect the desires of communities;
- Take into account impacts on the natural environment; and
- Address the effect on human health and welfare.

A key element is the EIS

NEPA requires that major potential transportation projects begin with an Environmental Impact Statement. The EIS is a complex process and document that recount and analyze:

- Whether there is a transportation need and how significant it is;
- What potential options exist for addressing the need, including the option of doing nothing;
- What impacts exist in relation to each option considered; and
- A recommendation about the course of action to take, based on the benefits and impacts identified by the study.

The location study

The EIS may show that there is no need to make future improvements to the study area’s transportation network.

Or it may show that the area requires changes designed to improve safety, decrease congestion and support regional economic development.

In that case, the second part of the East Columbia EIS – the location study – would begin.

(Continued on next page)

Early Summer 2007:

Completion and distribution of Draft EIS.

Mid Summer 2007: LOCATION PUBLIC HEARING.

Late Summer 2007: Selection of a preferred alternative and preparation of Final EIS.

A location study is used to refine the general findings developed by the EIS. It is used to:

- Provide an engineering assessment of specific alternatives;
- Document further the impacts (cultural, environmental, etc.) of specific alternatives; and
- Identify a preferred alternative.

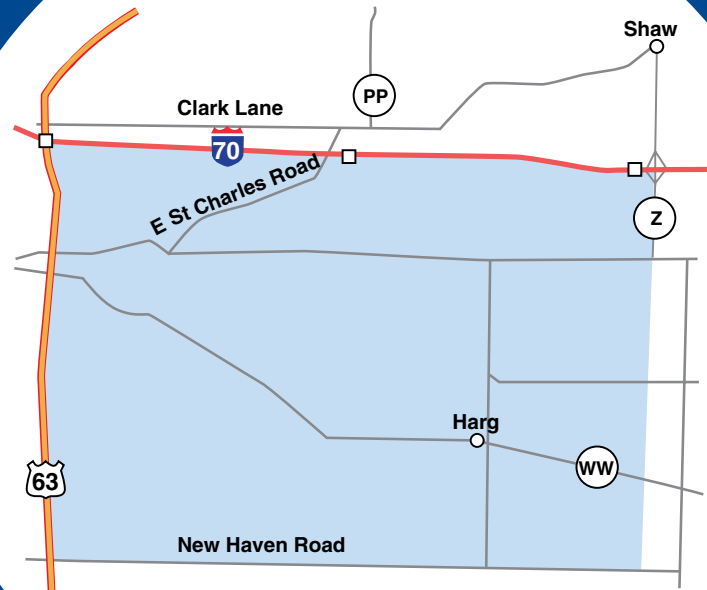
The goal of a location study is to produce a detailed analysis that will enable decision makers to determine what specific action to take (including doing nothing) and to understand what the cost and impacts of their choices will be.

And if the location study yields a recommendation to make specific improvements to an area's transportation network, the study usually will identify:

- Specific types of roadway improvements;
- The location of those improvements; and
- A time frame for when improvements will need to be made in order to respond to area growth, transportation needs and other factors.

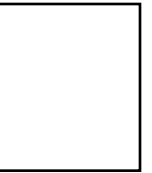
The study area

Under study is an area generally bounded on the north by Interstate 70 south to New Haven Road, and on the west by U.S. Highway 63 east to State Highway Z.



Study updates

Stay informed about this project at EastColumbiaEIS.com. To receive East Columbia EIS updates (including newsletters and meeting invitations) electronically, send an e-mail to EastColumbiaEIS@dofcpr.com with **SUBSCRIBE** in the subject line.



Ron Schikevitz
Burns & McDonnell Engineering
9400 Ward Parkway
Kansas City, MO 64114

**Please join us at our first
open-house public meeting
regarding East Columbia's future
transportation needs to be held
4-7 p.m. Tuesday, September 19,
at the Lighthouse Community
Church, 4275 Highway WW.**

**To sign up for project updates,
go to: www.EastColumbiaEIS.com**

Future needs to be studied

(Continued from front page)

Assisting with the EIS is a consultant team led by Burns & McDonnell Engineering and including HDR Engineers; Trabue, Hansen & Hinshaw, Inc.; and DeMent O'Flaherty & Collier Communications.

The EIS currently is scheduled to be completed in 2008. When finished, the study will outline the improvements, if any, that should be made to the transportation network serving the project area and what their likely impacts would be.

Any such study recommendations also would require approval and funding by the State of Missouri and/or local jurisdictions before construction could begin.

As the study unfolds, you can view project updates or sign-up for receiving the project newsletter electronically by going to:

www.EastColumbiaEIS.com



The East Columbia EIS offers many opportunities to learn more about the study and provide input through public meetings, stakeholder consultation and other means. Project information and updates will be posted at www.EastColumbiaEIS.com.